1781

GROTON HEIGHTS

AND

NEW LONDON

LETTERS

FROM

ZABDIEL ROGERS

AND

THOMAS MUMFORD

From the Originals
In the possession of Gordon L. Ford

Brooklyn N. Y.
Privately Printed
1881

Fifty copies printed
No. 17
Paul L. Ford

NOTE

Of the writer of the foregoing letter, the following records are found,

* * * * * *

" Col. Zabdiel Rogers of the State Militia was often called out during the War — In 1775 *his regiment was sent with others from the State to the City of New York — It was afterwards several times ordered to the Western border line of Connecticut — In* 1781 *he was on duty at Rye and Horseneck "*

(Miss Caulkins History of Norwich. Edition of 1866, p. 422)

* * * * * *

" The regiment from Norwich, under Col. Zabdiel Rogers was the first upon the ground — It arrived early in the evening — Wm. Williams Esq. of Lebanon rode from Lebanon to New London in three hours (twenty three miles) on horseback. The Enemy were just preparing to embark when he arrived "

(Miss Caulkins History of New London, p. 569.)

* * * * * *

Extract from the proceedings of a general Court Martial. beginning and held at New London and Groton, in the state of Connecticut, on the 20th. day of August Anno Domini 1782. *by warrant and order of His Excellency the Captain General of the said state, of which Brigadier - General Roger Newberry was President,*

" Zabdiel Rogers, Esq. Colonel of the 20th. regiment, was called upon to answer the charge of remaining inactive upon the 6th. day of September. The sentence was not guilty, and acquitted with honor."

(Battle of Groton Heights. By William W. Harris. p 76.)

N London. 7th. Sept. 1781

Dr. Sir:

I have the Unhappinefs to acquaint you Genl. Arnold with about 1500 Or 2000 Men Landed Here Yesterday Morning & have Burnt this Town From the Court House to Nathl. Shaw. House which was Sav'd & from Giles Mumfords House to Capt. Richards Store On Both Sides Except a few Houses on the West Side of the Way— & All the Stores, Houses &C' from Elliots Tavern To the Fort —— They Have Burnt your House & All Your Stores at Groton & Most of the Houses on the Bank — They Attack'd the fort at Groton with Great Spirit but were Repuls'd with Lofs Several Times by Col.° Ledyard who Commanded. who was Oblidg'd to Surrender to Superior Force. after the fort Had Surrender'd They Inhumanely Put him to Death as Also Capt. Peter Richards and A Number of Others — Giles was Engag'd with the Enemy the whole Day And is Much unwell to Day thro' his fatigue — your Family Went Back. Suppose to Paquatonnack. where Capt. Mumfords Wife & Children have Gone — The Goods that Were divided I was Lucky Eno. to Get to Norwich The Ev'g Before the Enemy Landed — Giles had a Very Slight Wound. . . . Cannot now Write you further Particulars Must Referr you to What I have Wrote The Gov.r & Shall Write again Imeadiately — The Enemy are Now Under Sail Going Away — Shou'd think it Best for you to Come Down —

I am With Great Affection Your friend

ZAB: ROGERS

Thos. Mumford Esq.r

(Addressed)
Thos. Mumford Esq.r

Per Express Now at Hartford

Groton 9th September 1781

Sir:

I have this Instt Recd yours of Yesterday p. Mr Saml Raymond Exprefs, Requesting a narrative of the Barbarous Scence of the Enemy Commited on the Brave Garison that Nobly defended Fort Griswd Colo Ledyard prevailed on a Number of the brave defenders of American Liberty to Joyn him in the defence of Said fortrefs added to the Small Garison amounting in the whole to about 150, who nobly defended Said fortrefs against About 1000 picked Brittish & foreign Troops, who Attacked that fort Sword in hand, & were Repulsed halfe an hour, during which time the Enemy Suferd About ¼ of their numbers in killed & wounded, but being overpowed in numbers Colo Ledyard finding the Enemy had gained pofsefsion of some part of the Fort & entering at the Gate, having three men kill'd, thot proper to Surrender himself with the Garison prisoners, & presented his Sword to an officer who Recd the Same & imediately Lunged it thro the Brave Commandant when the Ruffans (no doubt by order) pierced him in many places with Bayonets, Lieuts Chapman & Stanton of the Garison, with upwards of 70 others were inhumanly Murderdered with the Colonel, Chiefly the most worthy inhabitants of this Town, my Son Capt Peter Richards make one of this number—About forty are Dangerously wounded, & About forty made prisoners whose Lives were Spared by the interposition of a Brittish officer who entered the Fort too Late to Save the Brave Colo Ledyard &c, the names of the whole killed & wounded I have not time Just now to Send your Excellency, never was a post more nobly defended, nor Brittish Cruelty more wantonly displayed, we have Lost the flour of this Town both in officers & Res-

pectable inhabitants — my House with the Chief of the others on the Bank are Burnt & many families Left destitute of food & Raiment, all the Stores in New London & more than halfe the Houfes are Likewise Consumed, I Conclude your Excellency is informed the infamous arnold Commanded, he dined with Jerremiah Miller & afterwards had his House Burnt with the others, I Can give your Excellency no encouragement from Our privateers, the Two Brig^{s} I am Concerned in are Sunk to Save them. their Sails & Riggen all Consumed in Stores, one other has no guns, so that only one Remains fit for Duty unequal to the plan proposed, I here there is Two French Ships of force at Newport — Genl Tyler (now here) has tho^{t} proper to order Some publick Stores dealt out for the present Relief of those that have Lost their all, & no Husband &c. to provide them Support, he wishes to know your Excellency's pleasare Respecting his Conduct herein, & has appointed Doct^{r} Turner Superintendent of the Hospital department & direct him to Supply the needful for the wounded, I gave him my Advice in this matter

The foregoing is all that is preserved of a letter, shown by its contents to have been written by Thomas Mumford (a merchant trading in New London but having his residence in Groton upon the opposite side of the river) to Jonathan Trumbull Senr, then Govr of Conn^{t}

His daughter, Catherine was the wife of Captain Peter Richards who is thus mentioned in "The Richards Genealogy" p 96

"*Peter — born* 1754, *died* 1781 *Slain in Fort Griswold — married Catherine Mumford born* 1754, *died* 1805 *: residence New London ; had only Catherine, married Levi Huntington : residence Norwich*"

The following letter (the body of which is in the hand writing of William Williams, a Signer of the Declaration of Independence) refers to a rumored surprise three years prior to the assault and capture of New London and Groton Heights. I have been unable to find any other allusion to the affair.

G. L. F.

Lebanon Sepr 3^{d} ½ past 6: p. m. 78

Sir:

Your Letter & Inclofure this minute received gives me the first & only Intelligence I have concerning the appearance of a British Fleet off New London. Your Situation &c. will afford you, the earliest & most particular Intelligence, & you will not fail to give such early orders to the whole or Such part of your Division of the Militia of this State as the Exigence of ye Cafe Shall require, & the prefent appearance is such (unlefs different Accounts before this reaches you Shl^{d} be had) as renders it necefsary to be as Speedy as pofsible in ordering & collecting Them at New London or elswhere to oppofe any Attempt of the Enemy which may be made.

I am, wth Efteem and Regard
Sir Your Obed^{t}
hble Servant
Jonth Trumbull

P S You'l report your doings as Soon as Necefsary.

Maj^{r} General Huntington